DEVON MENTAL HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

1955-1956

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DEVON MENTAL HOSPITAL
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Reverend Sub Dean T. G. Shelmerdine

SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT

1st April, 1955, to 31st March, 1956

Exminster Hospital,
Exminster, near Exeter
(telephone: Exeter 71337)

Medical Superintendent:
Dr. S. M. Allan

Digby-Wonford Hospital,
Exeter
(telephone: Exeter 74057)

Medical Superintendent:
Dr. J. Russell

Group Administrative Office:
Exminster Hospital
(telephone: Exeter 71337)

Group Secretary:
D. W. Miller

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CONTENTS

	page
Devon Mental Hospital Management Committee	4
Sub-Committees	5
Annual Report	6
Appendix I—Developments and Improvements	10
Appendix II—Financial Report	11
Devon Mental Hospital Management Committee–Summary of Accounts	12
Group Statistics	13
EXMINSTER HOSPITAL :	
Medical Staff and Officers	14
Medical Superintendent's Report	15
DIGBY-WONFORD HOSPITAL :	
Medical Staff and Officers	20
Medical Superintendent's Report	21
Appendix 'A'—Digby Hospital	25
Appendix 'B'—Wonford Hospital	27

DEVON MENTAL HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1955-56

CHAIRMAN :

THE REVEREND SUB DEAN T. G. SHELMERDINE,
9, Livery Dole, Exeter.

VICE-CHAIRMAN :

A. J. WITHYCOMBE, ESQ., Redcot, Streatham Drive, Exeter

MEMBERS :

R. H. BAKER, ESQ., J.P., Millbrook, Braunton, N. Devon

W. H. GODDARD, ESQ., 4, The Crescent, Exeter

W. B. HALLETT, ESQ., J.P., Fontygary, 38, Belle Vue Road, Exmouth

DR. E. D. IRVINE, 5, Southernhay West, Exeter

C. A JACKSON, ESQ., Moortang, Two Mile Oak, Newton Abbot

G. W. A. JACKSON, ESQ., 44, Queen Street, Exeter

MRS. M. NICHOLS, Melrose, Polsloe Road, Exeter

ALDERMAN MRS. J. M. PHILLIPS, O.B.E., J.P., Awliscombe House, Honiton

THE REVEREND H. S. READ, Modbury Vicarage, Ivybridge

DR. H. SCOTT-FORBES, 8, Baring Crescent, Exeter

MRS. M. L. SYMONS, J.P., Petersfield House, Fortescue Road, Paignton *(Resigned, October, 1955)*

MISS A. E. TUCKER, Primrose Cottage, King's Nympton, N. Devon

J. G. WARNE, ESQ., 97, Bonhay Road, Exeter

GROUP OFFICIALS :

Group Secretary : D. W. Miller, F.H.A.,
Deputy Group Secretary : S. W. Keyte, A.H.A.
} Exminster Hospital, Exminster, Exeter

Finance Officer : R. E. Wilman, A.C.A., F.H.A.,
Deputy Finance Officer : C. H. Heath, A.I.M.T.A., F.H.A.,
} 26, Queen St., Exeter

SUB-COMMITTEES

Finance :

All the Members of the Management Committee

House :

EXMINSTER HOSPITAL :

Sir John E. Daw *(Chairman)*
Sir Arthur C. Reed *(Vice-Chairman)*
R. H. Baker, Esq., J.P.
W. T. Harvey, Esq.
Mrs. R. M. A. Hodge
C. A. Jackson, Esq.
Mrs. C. A. Jackson
Mrs. E. Kelly
Mrs. M. Nichols
Miss B. Parker
The Reverend Sub Dean T. G. Shelmerdine
Mrs. M. L. Symons, J.P.*
Miss A. E. Tucker
J. G. Warne, Esq.
A. J. Withycombe, Esq.

DIGBY-WONFORD HOSPITAL :

J. G. Warne, Esq. *(Chairman)*
A. J. Withycombe, Esq. *(Vice-Chairman)*
W. H. Goddard, Esq.
Mrs. P. Goodman
Mrs. R. M. A. Hodge
Dr. E. D. Irvine
G. W. A. Jackson, Esq.
Mrs. M. Nichols
Ald. H. C. Pedrick
Ald. Mrs. J. M. Phillips, O.B.E., J.P.
The Reverend H. S. Read
The Reverend E. Royle
Dr. H. Scott-Forbes
The Reverend Sub Dean T. G. Shelmerdine
Mrs. E. E. Tinkham
Col. C. P. Tremlett
Miss A. E. Tucker

Farm :

W. B. Hallett, Esq., J.P., *(Chairman)*
J. Crooke, Esq., *(Vice-Chairman)*

G. W. A. Jackson, Esq.
J. B. Martin, Esq.
J. G. Paul, Esq.
P. D. Rowsell, Esq.
The Reverend Sub Dean T. G. Shelmerdine
J. J. Wale, Esq.
J. G. Warne, Esq.
A. J. Withycombe, Esq.

Works :

The Reverend Sub Dean T. G. Shelmerdine *(Chairman)*

Sir John E. Daw
C. A. Jackson, Esq.
G. W. A. Jackson, Esq.
Sir Arthur C. Reed
Mrs. M. L. Symons, J.P.*
J. G. Warne, Esq.
A. J. Withycombe, Esq.

Supplies :

The Reverend Sub Dean T. G. Shelmerdine
A. J. Withycombe, Esq.
C. A. Jackson, Esq.
Mrs. M. Nichols
Mrs. M. L. Symons*
Miss A. E. Tucker
J. G. Warne, Esq.

* Resigned, October, 1955

SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEVON MENTAL HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Management Committee has pleasure in presenting its report for the year ended 31st March, 1956.

MEMBERSHIP

During the year we have welcomed as new members of the Committee Mrs. M. Nichols whose advent was recorded in last year's report, and The Reverend H. S. Read *vice* Mrs. M. L. Symons who resigned during the year to take up her abode in South Africa. Mr. Read is a member of the County Council and Chairman of the Mental Health Sub-Committee.

In March, 1956, the Regional Hospital Board appointed two new members—Lady Evelyn Anstey and Dr. T. M. Preece whose valuable co-operation we are delighted to have. We greatly regretted the loss of Alderman Mrs. J. M. Phillips and Mr. A. J. Withycombe. No one could have surmised that they had both reached an age at which it is the custom of the Regional Board to assume that their period of usefulness is ended, and the Management Committee without hesitation asked them to continue to serve on other Sub-Committees.

We reluctantly said farewell to Sir John Daw, the Chairman of the Exminster House-Committee. He had a long and honourable connection with the Hospital. We are grateful for all his devoted service and regret that though "his eye is not dim" his physical force has somewhat abated.

Our thanks are also due to Mrs. R. M. A. Hodge, Mrs. E. E. Tinkham and Col. C. P. Tremlett who ceased to be members of the Digby-Wonford House Committee at the end of the current year.

SUB-COMMITTEES, Etc.

The Management Committee and its Sub-Committees have met regularly during the year. All Committees meet monthly except in the case of the Works Committee and Supplies Committee which meet as and when required. A Group Medical Advisory Committee was set up in December, 1955. It is fully representative of our Medical Staff, the Health Authorities of the County of Devon and the City of Exeter and the general practitioners of the County and City.

The usual Statutory visits have been carried out including one to the twelve patients who are boarded-out at Saunton in North Devon.

The Chairman and Group Secretary have continued to represent the Committee at both Regional and National Meetings of the Association of Hospital Management Committees. Two members of the Committee have continued in membership of the Exeter Clinical

Area Committee ; the Chairman has attended meetings of Hospital Management Committee Chairmen convened by the Regional Hospital Board.

DEVELOPMENT

Although no additional buildings or beds have yet been provided, the use made of existing beds has again increased, the numbers of patients admitted and discharged in 1955 shewing an increase over the figures for 1954. At Wonford House this increase is remarkable ; being just less than a 100% increase on admissions and an increase of over 100% on discharges.

In May, 1955, Cavell Ward was opened at Digby, and in June, " Spurfield " was brought into use at Exminster ; together these units permitted a small measure of relief to the overcrowded women's wards.

In July, 1955, planning, which has now reached an advanced stage, commenced for a major development at Digby—an admission unit (48 beds), two villas (44 beds each), staff accommodation and the necessary enlargement of engineering and catering services. Frequent consultation between the Committee's and the Board's Officers and with the Architects and Engineering Consultants will ensure that the development is of the maximum value to the service.

The Minister of Health's Capital Programme for the Modernisation of Mental Hospitals was welcomed and the Committee decided to devote the entire allocation to the improvement of Exminster—its oldest hospital. Plans include :—

Continuation of the programme to provide sanitary annexes (Wards 12, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24).

A covered-way to serve many of the female wards.

Replanning Wards 12 and 19.

Conversion of the existing occupational therapy department, for women patients, to ward use.

At the time of writing, the new Sanitary Annexes for Wards 21 and 22/23 are being built.

Approval for the first of the new Occupational Therapy buildings at Exminster, one of which had been included in the Regional Hospital Board's Capital Programme for the financial year 1955/56 was delayed and building has not yet commenced, although a contract has now been awarded.

In March, 1956, the Committee discussed with representatives of Local Health Authorities and of other Hospital Management Committees, the possibility of setting up one or more Day Hospitals for senile patients who require some hospital treatment but who may sleep in their own homes. It is hoped that recommendations made to the Regional Hospital Board may in due course bear fruit.

The new out-patient clinic at Wonford is at last completed but its full use cannot be effective until the medical staff has been augmented ; approval has now been given for an additional Senior Hospital Medical Officer for the Digby-Wonford Hospital but we are hampered by lack of suitable residential accommodation.

Integration of the Digby and Wonford Hospitals has recently been completed and they are now regarded as one hospital—Digby-Wonford.

STAFF

The total number of nurses employed in the Group on 31st December, 1955, was three less than in the previous year ; the number of trained mental nurses remained virtually the same ; but students in training have dropped from 84 to 59. At Exminster, particulary, the position remains critical ; in the female division there were, on 31st December, 1955, only 19 full-time qualified nurses to staff 16 wards by day and night. Continued use of part-time local staff and those recruited from overseas is imperative.

The Cadet Nursing Scheme, referred to in last year's report, has maintained its usefulness but will need more recruits.

Other staff have been difficult to recruit in some grades, particularly those of a technical nature. It is imperative that, after years of restraint, the Committee should review its establishments, as much more could be done to improve the hospitals and the service they provide if, in certain grades, more staff could be employed.

SUPPLIES

The Committee has paid increasing attention to the purchase of supplies and greater use is being made of both annual and short-term contracting on a Group Basis. The use of short-term contracts is proving an economy.

BUILDINGS AND MAINTENANCE

Fortunately, an increased allocation of funds to maintain the old buildings was granted ; a programme recommended by the Works Sub-Committee in April, 1955, was largely achieved and included a substantial amount of external painting. Much internal redecoration and renovation remains to be done, particularly at Exminster. Whenever it is possible, the Committee tries to effect an upgrading of wards which are due for redecoration ; the allocation of maintenance funds, therefore, is even now inadequate to carry out minor improvements such as the provision of ward kitchens, clinic rooms, staff rooms and adequate toilet facilities in the grounds, or the equally important improvements in heating and lighting.

FARMS

The dissolution of a large part of the Exminster Farm, to which reference was made in the last report, in spite of continued protest,

was effected by the sale of the dairy herd in March, 1956 and the leasing of 125 acres of land from Lady Day. We have now been instructed similarly to part with the smaller herd of Guernseys at Digby ; the land will remain within the occupation of the Committee.

REGIONAL HOSPITAL BOARD

The Committee acknowledges with great pleasure and gratitude the cordial relationship that continues to exist between itself and the Regional Board and its officers. Often our needs are greater than can be supplied but we never fail to receive a sympathetic hearing and considerable practical help when possible. We have welcomed visits from members of the Mental Health Committee. Senior officers of the Board have come on many occasions to help with the planning of services. The Senior Catering Advisor of the Ministry of Health visited Digby in February, 1956.

BOARD OF CONTROL

Commissioners of the Board of Control made statutory visits : to Exminster on 9th and 10th November, 1955 ; to Digby-Wonford on 28th and 29th February, 1956.

LEAGUE OF FRIENDS

The League for Digby-Wonford is now in active operation. Its first function was a delightful garden party given to the patients at Wonford House, in July, 1955. Gifts to the hospital include two high-frequency radio receivers and bedside lockers. The League has arranged a number of entertainments in the hospital ; patients have been visited and taken into Exeter. We are very grateful for all that the League is doing for our patients.

RECREATION

The social activities of the Group all continue to flourish. We welcome the resuscitation of the Cricket Club at Wonford. The cricket pitch at Digby is fit only for heroes though the Australians would shy away even more readily than they did at Headingley.

The Christmas programmes at the three hospitals were as full of fun and good fare as that of a five-star hotel. The Christmas Pantomime at Exminster (" Robinson Crusoe ") was voted one of the " best ever ". Mr. R. F. Delderfield missed a peformance of " Worms Eye View " to his loss. The Sports Days were held as usual.

Again the Committee voices its deep appreciation of the loyalty and devotion evinced by the whole staff of the three hospitals. To Doctors, Nurses, Administrative, Technical and Ancillary Staffs we express our gratitude. Hospital service of every kind is a high vocation. Its fulfilment is its greatest reward.

T. G. SHELMERDINE, *Chairman.*

August, 1956.

APPENDIX I

DEVELOPMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS

During the year ended 31st March, 1956, the following capital works were completed :—

EXMINSTER	Adaptation of the first floor of the Sanatorium as patients' recreation room.
DIGBY	Resiting of the incinerator.

Capital works commenced during the year 1955/56 included :—

DIGBY	Re-organisation of the engineering services, stage II (hot water services).
WONFORD*	Installation of temporary boiler.
WONFORD*	Out-patient treatment clinic.

* now completed.

Capital projects included in the 1956/57 programme :—

EXMINSTER	Occupational Therapy Buildings.
EXMINSTER	Installation of third boiler.
EXMINSTER	Sanitary annexes, Wards 22, 23 and 21.
EXMINSTER	Conversion of existing Occupational Therapy space to ward use.
EXMINSTER	Improvements to mortuary.
DIGBY	Major development scheme.

Capital projects included in programmes for subsequent years, or awaiting approval :—

EXMINSTER	Sanitary annexes, Wards 12 and 19, and modernisation.
EXMINSTER	Sanitary annexes, Wards 20 and 24.
EXMINSTER	Covered-way between female wards.
EXMINSTER	Houses for medical staff.
EXMINSTER	Lift in "Centre House".
EXMINSTER	New workshops.
EXMINSTER	Replanning stores and kitchen.
DIGBY	Nurse Training School.
WONFORD	Re-organisation of engineering services.
WONFORD	Lift.
WONFORD	Conversion of "Bowmoor House".

APPENDIX II

FINANCIAL REPORT

For the Year Ended 31st March, 1956

Expenditure (net) for the year was £602,006, which was £4,363 more than the amount allowed by the Minister of Health. Income amounted to £12,189, which was £411 less than had been estimated.

During the year costs have continued to rise, and many heads of expenditure reflect this. Over £38,000 more was paid in salaries and wages, and although it has been possible to reduce somewhat the serious understaffing, the majority of this increase has been for enhanced rates of pay for the existing staff. An increase of almost 70% in the expenditure on Drugs and Medical Equipment is some indication of the extent to which the newer forms of treatment are being introduced.

The Regional Board made available considerably larger sums for reconditioning and improving buildings, and full advantage has been taken of the opportunity to reduce arrears of work which had accumulated, expenditure being almost double that of the previous year.

Again the endowment funds available to the Committee have proved of considerable value where exchequer expenditure would not have been appropriate. £2,800 was spent from this source, adding materially to the well-being of both patients and staff.

An abstract of the Exchequer accounts, and also the Endowment Fund transactions is given on page 12.

R. E. WILMAN,

Finance Officer.

DEVON MENTAL HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Summary of Accounts—Year to 31st March, 1956

HOSPITAL EXPENDITURE (Exchequer Funds)

Estimate £		£	Actual £
366,651	Gross salaries and wages (Including National Insurance and Superannuation)... ...	364,395	
118,352	Provisions	120,134	
13,341	Uniforms and Clothing	12,987	
11,066	Drugs, Dressings, Medical and Surgical Appliances	13,175	
45,094	Fuel, Light, Power, Water and Laundry ...	40,744	
28,853	Maintenance of Buildings, Plant and Grounds	31,614	
22,685	Domestic Repairs, Renewals & Replacements	24,682	
77,572	All other Expenses	90,386	
683,614			698,117
	LESS :		
90,032	Direct Credits (Staff board and lodging, canteens, farms and gardens, etc.) ...		99,807
593,582			598,310
4,061	ADD : Group Administration		3,696
597,643		TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£602,006
	INCOME		
12,000	Accommodation and treatment of patients in single rooms and small wards		11,613
600	Rents, and other miscellaneous income ...		576
12,600		TOTAL INCOME	£ 12,189

ENDOWMENT AND OTHER FUNDS

		Capital £	Revenue £
Receipts :	From Minister of Health under Sect. 7...		1,655
	From other sources under Sect. 59 ...		2,050
	Other receipts		49
	Cash in Hand, etc., at 1st April, 1955 ...		5,093
			£ 8,847
Payments :	For purposes relating to hospital services and research		937
	Other payments—		
	Amenities for patients		1,420
	Amenities for staff		457
	Administrative expenses		4
	Cash in Hand, etc., at 31st March, 1956		6,029
			£ 8,847

GROUP STATISTICS

Patients

The following figures summarise the admission and discharge of patients in the Group hospitals during the year 1955 :—

	Voluntary, Temporary and Certified Patients		*Emergency Admissions (sec. 20/21, Lunacy Act, 1890)*
NUMBER OF PATIENTS ON THE REGISTERS, 1st JANUARY, 1955	2183		9
Admissions during 1955 ...	* 977	3160	† 60
Discharges during 1955 ...	782		
Deaths during 1955	177	959	47
NUMBER OF PATIENTS ON THE REGISTERS, 31st DECEMBER, 1955		2201	13

* Includes those patients first admitted under section 20/21, and subsequently dealt with as Voluntary, Temporary or Certified Patients.

† Excludes those subsequently dealt with.

* Emergency admissions (included in total admissions, above) :—	*1955*	*1954*	*1953*
	387	300	291

	1955	*1954*	*1953*
Number of patients actually resident on 31st December :—	2214	2173	2182
Of whom, aged 65 and over	776	775	767

The following table illustrates the increasing "turnover":—

	1955	*1954*	*1953*
Total Admissions	1037	934	857
Total Discharges	809	703	627

EXMINSTER HOSPITAL
(1639 beds)

Medical Staff

Medical Superintendent :

S. M. ALLAN, M.D., Ch.B. (Glas.) D.P.M. (Lond.)

Senior Hospital Medical Officer and Deputy Medical Superintendent :

J. W. FISHER, M.R.C.S. (Eng.) L.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.P.H., D.P.M.

Senior Hospital Medical Officers :

T. J. K. BROWNLEES, M.R.C.S. (Eng.) L.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.P.M.

A. JACK, M.B., Ch.B. (Glas.)

Junior Hospital Medical Officers :

J. R. ROCYN-JONES, L.M.S.S.A. (Lond.)

C. P. BURGES, M.B., Ch.B. (Edin.)

R. W. THOMSON, M.B., Ch.B. (Edin.)

Officers

Secretary : S. W. KEYTE, A.H.A.

Steward : W. CONNETT

Matron : MISS I. PRIDHAM, S.R.N., R.M.P.A.

Chief Male Nurse : W. H. NEWNS, S.R.N., R.M.N.

Superintendent Engineer : J. FAIRCLOUGH

Group Clerk of Works : T. E. REDDAWAY

Farm Manager : G. L. COLLINGS

Pharmacist : B. C. T. SNOW, Ph.C., F.P.S.

Laboratory Technician : M. C. LANGLEY, A.I.M.L.T.

Church of England Chaplain : REV. W. PARRY, B.A.

Roman Catholic Priest : VERY REV. CANON P. J. TOBIN, V.F.

Free Church Chaplain : REV. M. E. KELLY

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE YEAR 1955

Exminster Hospital,
Near Exeter

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Medical Superintendent's Report for the year 1955.

The admissions for 1955 again show an increase on the previous year. The discharges, transfers, and deaths for the first time outnumbered the admissions, so that at the end of the year there was no increase in the number of patients. I must make it clear, however, that the overcrowding is still a serious problem and can only be solved by the provision of further accommodation. Unfortunately, it will be a long time apparently before this is forthcoming.

On the 1st January, 1955, there were 1610 patients on the Register, and 6 Emergency Admissions ; 603 males and 1007 females, plus 3 males and 3 females.

Classification of the above :—

	Male	Female	Total
Voluntary	166	260	426
Temporary	–	–	–
Certified	437	747	1184
	603	1007	1610
Emergency Admissions Sec. 20/21	3	3	6
			1616

ADMISSIONS

Including statutory transfers, the admissions were as follows :—

	Male	Female	Total
Voluntary	232	298	530
Temporary	1	–	1
Certified	43	55	98
	276	353	629

EMERGENCY ADMISSIONS

Section 20/21 ; 151 males, 172 females—Total 323. Of the total emergency admissions 290 became Voluntary patients, 1 Temporary Patient and 7 Certified patients (these figures are included in the direct admissions shown above). Seven Emergency admissions were discharged and 18 died. Eight remained on the 31st December, 1955.

DISCHARGES

	Male	Female	Total
Recovered	95	193	288
Improved	105	84	189
Not Improved	9	12	21
	209	289	498

RESIDENT

There were on the books at the end of the year 1608 patients and 8 Emergency patients, classified as follows :—

	Male	Female	Total
Voluntary	195	286	481
Temporary	–	–	–
Certified	423	704	1127
	618	990	1608
Emergency Admissions	7	1	8
	625	991	1616

DEATHS

There were 151 deaths, an increase of 7 on the previous year. No less than 116 of the deaths were of patients over the age of 65 years.

GENERAL HEALTH

There were no epidemics during the year. A small number of new cases of tuberculosis was notified. The mass radiography unit visited the hospital in December, 1955, and as a result a small number of patients were put on special observation.

The Sanatorium has been working well during the year and only a few vacancies occur from time to time.

The Geriatric Wards which, year in, year out, work to full capacity, throw a great strain on the nursing staff. This nursing of old people is one of the growing problems, for as time goes on their number increases, without the necessary provision being made for their nursing.

TREATMENT UNITS

The Insulin Therapy units have been working hard throughout

the year and the results have been most gratifying. This type of treatment requires expert medical and nursing care, and with our small staffs it is not easy to organise.

Electric Convulsive Therapy, modified by relaxants and anaesthetics, continues to be given to all suitable cases. The results are excellent, and in many cases, dramatic. It is hoped shortly to upgrade one of the female wards to house this important therapeutic unit and give both patients and staff better facilities.

A great deal of excellent work has been done in the treatment of the more chronic patients and the results in discharges and better stabilisation of difficult patients have been extremely good. Several of our nurses are now specialising in this form of treatment and their enthusiasm has much to do with the results.

Occupational Therapy has been increased during the year and additional staff employed. This year a start will be made on the building of the new Occupational Therapy departments and this will enable us to organise these activities on a proper basis.

CLINICS

Out-patient clinics are held at Bideford, Exeter Eye Infirmary, and at the Hospital, but Dr. Brownlees also has a clinic in the Torbay Hospital. Excluding the Torbay Hospital clinic, there were 369 new patients and combined attendances of 1,733, a very large increase on the previous year.

ENTERTAINMENTS

The social activities of the patients include weekly cinema shows, dances, whist drives, coach outings, and many outdoor games. The staff Dramatic Club is also very active and provides excellent shows each year. The Annual Pantomime is of more than local interest and is always attended by full houses. Last year they produced "Jack and Jill". The Club also presented "Golden Rain", and "Nothing but the Truth".

These plays are much enjoyed and it is a pleasure to see how the standard of acting and producing is rising.

NURSING STAFF

The Preliminary Training School for St. Lawrence's Hospital, Digby-Wonford Hospital, the Royal Western Counties Hospital, in addition to Exminster, is held here and continues to do good work in spite of the small number of students. Nurse recruitment is as meagre as ever and there does not appear to be any solution in the near future.

The Nursing Staff as a whole deserve great credit for their work under difficult conditions. I am happy to record my great appreciation.

Male Nurse J. W. T. Vile was the first nurse in the Hospital Examination and won the medal. It was presented at a Public meeting by Lady Evelyn Anstey. During the year six nurses qualified as R.M.N.

LABORATORY REPORT

	Patients	Staff	Total
Bacteriological	1018	87	1105
Hæmatological	827	176	1003
Biochemical	216	61	277
Post-mortem	36	–	36
Histological	27	–	27

FARM REPORT

During the year preparations were made to get rid of the milking herd of pedigree South Devon Cattle. This was at the order of the Ministry of Health. In future the farm will concentrate on pig rearing and the production of eggs. The Market Gardens will also be increased and so provide a better supply of fresh vegetables.

CLERK OF WORKS' DEPARTMENT

As usual an immense amount of repair work had to be carried out and included renewing rain water gutters, road repairs, external painting, renewal of some ceilings and floors and countless other small jobs.

A number of wards have been redecorated and upgraded in various ways, such as the provision of kitchens and a few extra toilets. A new steam duct had to be taken to the Nurses' Home to accommodate the new steam main. Many of the hospital sub-ways had to be cleaned up and white-washed as the Plenum system of heating was again brought into use.

A part of one wing of the Nurses' Home was adapted for the accommodation of male nurses, and an external staircase fitted.

Repair work in this hospital is never ended, as the wards are old and out of date. The quality of work of this department is high and the staff deserve much credit for the good work done.

ENGINEER'S DEPARTMENT

An old Lancashire boiler was converted into a storage unit for hot water for the laundry and ward 31. The heating of the Church was converted and a new oil burning stove installed. Electronic boiler control was installed in the Main Boiler Plant.

In this department too, a great deal of repair work has had to be done to keep pace with the ageing equipment. When opportunity permits new electrical wiring is done, better heating of wards installed, and new lighting points made.

Modern times demand great increases in electrical power and conversions of older systems. Each year sees this policy being carried out but it requires care and thought and good workmanship. Our engineering department continues to do excellent work and the staff are to be congratulated on all that has been done.

GENERAL

Retirements— Three members of the staff retired during the year :—

Miss A. Kentisbeer (Ward Sister)

Mr. E. Holman (Driver)

Mr. G. A. Northway (Assistant Chief Male Nurse).

All left with the best wishes of their colleagues for a long and well-earned retirement.

It is with regret that I have to record the death whilst still in the service of three of our staff : Mr. B. Strong (nursing staff), Mr. P. Pepperell and Mr. C. Pepperell of the engineers' department. We were sorry also to hear of the passing of Dr. R. A. G. Penny, a former Deputy Medical Superintendent, who had maintained a friendly interest with the hospital since his retirement.

I wish once again to thank my medical colleagues, all officers and staff for the hard work that has been put in during the year, and for their loyalty and support.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Committee for their encouragement and support.

I have the honour to be,

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

S. M. ALLAN,

Medical Superintendent.

DIGBY-WONFORD HOSPITAL

(605 beds)

Medical Superintendent :
J. RUSSELL, M.B., Ch.B., (Glas.) D.P.M.
Consultant Psychiatrist :
B. V. EARLE, M.D., (Dub.), B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.M.
Hospital Secretary : J. GAPPER, A.H.A.
Pharmacist : E. HODGE, M.P.S.
Superintendent Engineer : D. GIBSON
Church of England Chaplain :
REVD. SUB DEAN T. G. SHELMERDINE

DIGBY

Medical Staff

Senior Hospital Medical Officer & Deputy Medical Superintendent :
J. SCOTT, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., (N.U.I.,) D.P.M., L.M., (Coombe)
Junior Hospital Medical Officer : Vacant

Officers

Matron : Miss A. O'BRIEN, S.R.N., R.F.N., R.M.N., R.M.P.A.
Chief Male Nurse : L. R. HARWOOD, S.R.N., R.M.N., R.M.P.A.
Farm Manager : H. J. HOOPER
Free Church Chaplain : REVD. H. W. HUGHES
Roman Catholic Priest : REVD. T. O'LEARY

WONFORD

Medical Staff

Junior Hospital Medical Officer :
C. P. O'TOOLE, L.R.C.P. & S. (I.)

Officers

Matron : MISS E. A. LENTON, S.R.N., R.M.N., S.C.M.
Chief Male Nurse : T. T. HAY, S.R.N., R.M.N.
Administrative Assistant : J. N. A. CALLINGHAM
Free Church Chaplain : REVD. P. L. JONES
Roman Catholic Priest : REVD. W. CARTER

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE YEAR 1955

DIGBY-WONFORD HOSPITAL.

To : The Devon Mental Hospital Management Committee.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In submitting this report for 1955 I propose to call your attention to topics of salient importance, and to present the Hospital statistics in an Appendix.

THE PROBLEM OF THE ELDERLY PATIENT

The steady increase in the number of admissions of women patients over the age of 65, to which reference was made last year, continues. It can be repeated that Cavell Ward of 19 beds, opened in 1955 with great hopes that it could be used as an admission ward for Voluntary Patients, was so used for two or three months, providing a great stimulus and encouragement to the Nursing Staff, who prefer to nurse in congenial surroundings. It was then used for convalescent patients, but by the end of the year Cavell Ward was static, owing to the influx of elderly patients. It can be anticipated that future vacancies in this ward will not average more than two or three a year. Curie Ward of 17 beds, opened in December 1953, is in a similar plight.

I think it is important to emphasise this matter. In this Clinical Area little has been done so far for the long-term ageing sick. It is impossible to divorce the physical and mental aspects of the ageing process. It is apparent that the brunt of this nursing problem is falling on the Mental Hospitals, and at the sacrifice of beds ear-marked for the treatment of acute illness in the younger age groups.

OUT-PATIENT CLINICS AND RELATED MATTERS

In May 1955 an Out-patient Clinic under my charge was opened at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, and Dr. B. V. Earle, the newly appointed Consultant at Wonford, opened a Clinic at the Torbay Hospital. Both these Hospitals already had long-established busy clinics under the care of Dr. Scott Forbes. The immediate effect of the new clinics was to increase the demand for Hospital beds for the treatment of depressions and to provide for the more intensive therapy of the neuroses. Particularly was this evident in the urban area of the Torquay Hospital Management Committee. It has therefore been necessary to exercise a certain selection in the type of illness admitted to the Wonford Wing. (There is nothing new in this policy—it has been practised since the first patient was admitted to Wonford in 1801, the original charter of Wonford placing great

emphasis on prospects of recoverability). It is more than ever necessary to continue to develop the Wonford Wing in a manner which will at least not repel patients from seeking early treatment. With this policy it has been possible to double the admission and the discharge rates at Wonford and at the time of writing this, turn-over of beds is becoming even more accelerated, and fast approaching that of Digby. It may yet prove that successful development at Wonford will lie, not in further increasing the total number of beds (they have been increased since 1948 from 123 to 179), but in the increasing patient turn-over. With this the much criticised weekly cost per patient bed occupied can be well justified. The corollary is that as the patient load of acute cases per doctor increases, so eventually will more doctors be required in the Digby-Wonford Unit. An increase of establishment of one Senior Hospital Medical Officer (not yet realised !) in the first seven years of the Health Service, bears no relation to the fact that in-patient work has more than doubled, and three new out-patient clinics have been set up, namely at Axminster, the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, and Torbay Hospital. It is also noted that the emergency service provided at Digby for short-order patients (Section 20) dealt with 116 patients in 1955, of whom 27 never reached the official registers. Eighteen of these 27 patients were intensively treated and recovered within the 17-day period of observation. Doctors can only continue to work at this pressure for a limited time, after which it becomes impossible to maintain the high standards we set ourselves. In 1956 it is planned to open yet another Out-patient Department, this time to provide a Treatment Centre at Wonford, to which patients may be referred from the diagnostic clinics of the General Hospitals. This project has received the very active support of the South Western Regional Hospital Board, and of your Management Committee, as it is anticipated it will relieve pressure on beds. This spells more work for the Medical and Nursing Staffs.

The trend is for all admissions to Wonford to be on a Voluntary basis, and it is desirable that admission to Wonford should not have in it any element of compulsion. The logical outcome of this trend would be the attainment of a stage at which all Wonford admissions could be "non-statutory" patients. These are patients whose admission and treatment does not fall within the scope of the Lunacy and Mental Treatment Acts. Already the admissions of Voluntary Patients to our Mental Hospitals could be so graded, were it not for legal considerations, which are becoming out-moded.

It is to be observed that medical policy at Digby-Wonford is revolutionising rapidly, despite handicaps, not the least being over-crowding at Digby, and a continuous 100% bed occupancy from

which there is never any relief. The absence of any margin in the use of beds works adversely against the transfer of patients from the Digby Wing and the Wonford Wing, as such transfers would have to be on an exchange basis, which is ethically undesirable and one which I personally find most distasteful. It is to be hoped that the building development forecast for Digby will remove this handicap and enable full advantage to be taken of the merging of the two Hospitals. As we are dealing with human values, sick people, and the deep concerns of their relations, it is apparent that the merging of these Hospitals involves much more than the adding together of the numbers of beds or the presentation of a single account. It is essential that the merger must produce a community service which was not heretofore available but which is built on established traditions.

STAFF

Student Nurses have been hard to come by, but we have been fortunate in maintaining a Nursing Staff up to establishment. I still think that being able to attract and retain Staff is closely linked with the "atmosphere" of a Hospital, and most certainly in Digby-Wonford we have not inherited buildings and the primitive housing conditions—absence of toilet facilities, hot water, etc.—which repel prospective Staff and prospective Patients elsewhere. Despite our advantages the staffing position requires and receives almost daily consideration from your Matrons and Chief Male Nurses. No Hospital can afford to slip up from complacency.

Successes in Examinations are deserving of congratulation.

	Digby	Wonford
Certificate in Mental Nursing	Daphne Hunter Ivor Rowe	Doreen S. Smith
Certificate in General Nursing	Harry Martin Jennison	W. L. Hicks

The retirement of the following is to be noted, and to them is accorded thanks for past services and good wishes for the future.

Digby	Wonford
Mr. T. Bragg, Garden Labourer, (19 years)	Mr. M. G. Buck, Stoker, (27 years)
Mr. E. Brooks, Charge Nurse, (36 years)	Mr. A. Ellis, Head Cook, (16 years)
	Mr. G. Holmes, Foreman, (36 years)

GENERAL

The atmosphere of the Hospitals has changed remarkably during the past few years. Locked doors are gradually being eliminated, and it has become an irritation to find a door locked and then to find a key with which to open it. The therapeutic programme of concentrating attention on the patient who has been here for years and affording him the advantage of modern treatments, has made possible an open door régime. More and more do patients manage their own Hospital affairs and entertainments and take part in group discussions. This positive approach, eliminating as it does all authoritarianism and all negative restrictions, calls for high standards of nursing care and vigilance with a participation by the nurses in the treatment of patients which was hardly possible before. I must pay tribute to the Nursing Staff for the magnificent way in which they have co-operated in these measures.

My medical and surgical colleagues in the Hospital Group and at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital have afforded us every assistance, and particularly must I mention Dr. W. Walter and Dr. K. J. Powell, who, often at great personal inconvenience, have given anaesthetic sessions at Wonford for electrical treatment. It is anticipated that even greater calls will be made on these gentlemen when the new Out-patient Treatment Centre gets into stride. It will then be necessary to arrange anaesthetics at stated times to meet the needs of Out-patients from far distant rural areas.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I have to record my personal appreciation of the sympathetic understanding by which your Committee and your Officers have enabled me to overcome many obstacles and to pursue active progressive policies.

JOHN RUSSELL,

Medical Superintendent.

October, 1956.

APPENDIX 'A'

DIGBY HOSPITAL

The year 1955 ended with 425 patients in residence. The maximum number resident on any one night was 427 (404 in 1954).

On Registers, 1st January, 1955

	Male	Female	Total	Comparative figure for 1954
Voluntary	43	41	84	75
Temporary	–	–	–	1
Certified	138	174	312	312
Sec. 20	–	–	–	3
	181	215	396	391

Admissions
(Including Statutory Transfers)

Voluntary	63	95	158	132
Temporary	2	6	8	2
Certified	9	26	35	41
	74	127	201	175

Discharges

Recovered	20	37	57	46
Relieved	20	44	64	50
Not Improved	12	15	27	27
	52	96	148	123

Deaths	10	19	29	44

Remaining on Registers, 31st December, 1955

Voluntary	56	49	105	84
Temporary	1	3	4	–
Certified	136	175	311	312
Sec. 20	–	5	5	–
	193	232	425	396

Emergency
(Sec. 20/21 Admissions) :

	Male	Female	Total	Comparative figure for 1954
* Numbers admitted during the year	36	80	116	81
Of these, subsequently treated as :—				
Voluntary	17	51	68	44
Temporary	2	5	7	2
Certified	4	10	14	16
Died	1	1	2	2
Left the Hospital	12	13	25	17
	36	80	116	81

* Those subsequently treated as Voluntary, etc. patients are included in the admissions above.

APPENDIX 'B'

WONFORD HOSPITAL

On Registers, 1st January, 1955

	Male	Female	Total	Comparative figure for 1954
Voluntary	26	54	80	77
Temporary	–	–	–	2
Certified	33	64	97	91
	59	118	177	170

Admissions
(including Statutory Transfers)

Voluntary	54	84	138	75
Temporary	–	1	1	1
Certified	5	3	8	13
	59	88	147	89

Discharges

Recovered	21	38	59	25
Relieved	24	33	57	33
Not Improved	9	11	20	5
	54	82	136	63

Deaths	6	9	15	19

Remaining on Registers, 31st December, 1955

Voluntary	28	61	89	80
Temporary	–	–	–	–
Certified	30	54	84	97
	58	115	173	177

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